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RUEHNEH/AMCONSUL HYDERABAD 0079
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1798
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 5641
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 2262
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS,
BANGLADESH ELECTIONS, PALESTINE; NEW DELHI.

This countrywide cable reports on relevant media reaction/opinion from India's large non-English press. The Mission reports on English-language media via email through the daily "Early Edition" summary.

INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

¶1. "INDIA IN SEARCH OF A STANCE VIS-A-VIS PAKISTAN" editorial in the December 31, 2008, Mumbai edition of centrist Marathi daily LOKMAT. "China's Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei's visit to Pakistan seems to have eased considerable tension between India and Pakistan. If Pakistan's mellowed political stance is any indication, Pakistan has for now realized the need to avoid belligerent posturing and resume the peace dialogue.... Pakistan's leadership is not making provocative statements about war with India, and ... the high-level military cadre is talking about de-escalated tensions. Now this rhetoric has to be taken with a pinch of salt. But it is certainly in the interest of peace and security in the region.... India cannot strain its relations with Pakistan beyond a limit. At the same time, it cannot let Pakistan get away with anti-India terror initiatives. Pakistan's political stance changes periodically and India needs to therefore adopt a suitable stance..."

BANGLADESH ELECTIONS

¶2. "BANGLADESH: WILL INDIA BE ABLE TO TAKE THE ADVANTAGE?" editorial in the December 31, 2008 Mumbai-based right-of-center Gujarati daily MUMBAI SAMACHAR. "The results of the elections in the state of Jammu-Kashmir and India's neighboring nation Bangladesh are a barometer of sorts for the extremist and radical elements.... The triumph of the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League in the Bangladesh polls suggests the return of moderates in the nation dominated by pro-Pakistan elements. This is the ripe moment for India to utilize her diplomatic skills in ensuring that such elements do not rule the roost there henceforth. Bangladesh has also become a safe haven for the ULFA and the Naga militants who have been carrying out their nefarious activities in India's northeastern states. The election results are a golden opportunity lining for India to take steps to stop all such anti-India activities on Bangladeshi soil....and work with the new government there to flush out such radical elements operating on Bangladeshi soil."

¶3. "A DEMOCRATIC OPPORTUNITY" editorial in December 31 Kolkata Bengali independent ANANDABAZAR PATRIKA: "... A clean sweep by Sheik Hasina's Awami League-led alliance...is a triumph of democracy... The shadow of religious fundamentalism was very much there in Bangladesh's pre-election political atmosphere... However, people of Bangladesh have voiced their protest through the democratic election, which is very significant in view of the sub-continent's current volatile situation...

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The election has paved the way to begin a new chapter in Indo-Bangladesh relations... The new Bangladesh government is expected to carefully look into the allegation that terrorist forces are using its soil to carry out anti-India activities... It will not be comfortable for Bangladesh also if terrorism takes its root in the country."

¶4. "RETURN OF INDIA'S FRIEND" editorial in December 31 Kolkata Bengali left-of-center SAMBAD PRATIDIN: "...Sheik Hasina's victory...is a clear mandate against terrorism and communalism. For India also, her return to power is a comforting change. Considering the prevailing situation in the sub-continent it is important for India to get Bangladesh by its side. India is likely to use the opportunity to raise its longstanding demand that terrorists are operating from Bangladesh and engage the Hasina government to take prompt actions against them."

PALESTINE

¶5. "PALESTINE : IS THE WORLD - CONSCIENCE ALIVE?", editorial in December 30, 2008 right-of-center Urdu daily "MUNSIF", Hyderabad: "Countries giving every sort of support to Israel tacitly, and providing only lip services to Hamas and the Palestinian people, including Islamic countries particularly Arab countries are mute spectators of the Israeli's aggression and barbarism in Gaza belt. As per their routine tradition, they appealed to America once or twice and considered as they have accomplished their bounden duty. On the one hand, Israeli beasts are breaking the records of Changhiz and Halaku, while on the other hand, Arab countries are demonstrating their same old lackadaisical attitude. Our government is also keeping mum over the holocaust. Perhaps Manmohan's government adopted such a pro - Israel policy that it does not have courage to even condemn the massacre, without munching the words. Sometimes we get confused whether it is the same India where Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, loudly, favored and supported the Palestinian movement?"

¶6. "IS IT NOT TERRORISM?" editorial in December 30, 2008 right-of-center Urdu daily "HAMARA SAMAJ", New Delhi: "Massacre of Palestinians by Israel continued even today, the third day. Yesterday, the United States of America appealed to Israel that unarmed citizens should not be made targets. But today's fresh incident revealed that Israel does not have least regards for American appeals. Israel also trampled the appeals for a cease fire made by the so called world forum, the United Nations Organization. The entire world community is a silent and mute spectator because they think the blood shed by the Zionist state is justified since the oppressed ones are Muslims. In fact, America is supporting Israel cryptically as usual. This is vindicated by the fact that bombs dropped by Israeli bomber planes on the Islamic University are of American make. Deliberate genocide of guileless citizens is nothing but terrorism. So - called

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Human Rights Organizations should be made answerable to this question. The whole world is looking at the naked barbarism of Israel while the latter is adamant to break all world records of butchery."
MULFORD